Eros in Poetry and Prose: Book Nine



Edited by
Patrick Bruskiewich

February, 2023

Eros in Poetry and Prose Volume Nine

Obelisk Press

Vancouver, BC, Canada

Cover: Red Headed Madonna, photographer unknown

The Editor can be reached at

obelisk_press_vancouver@yahoo.com

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Dear God,

Forgive me

For I have sinned.



The Eros in Poetry and Prose Series

Eros in literature is one of the finest and most sublime way to share one's love.

The purpose of the ***Eros in Poetry and Prose*** Series is to share some of the most amorous and enticing pieces of poetry and prose to be found in the English Language. This is the ninth book in the series. Its release coincides with Valentine's Day 2023.

In this edition you will find original poems and pieces of prose all meant to tickle your fancy ...

Enjoy!

Patrick Bruskiewich
Vancouver, BC, Canada

Eros in Poetry

Two Poems by Tayler Hutton

Re: Birth

How sublime it feels to simply be.
To exist, without condition
without expectation
without guilt or duty.
To embrace
the moment fully.
The ability to be present,
is far more precious
than the pleasures of mass consumption.
Last night I wept.
My life has bore a fruit-less search for satiation
I never realized all I needed
was nothing at all.

The more you know the more you wish you didn't

Are the mad really so ?
To be driven to the point of delirium—a honey-pot-psychosis
by the salty slap of a deep and infinite ocean
teeming with the plastic legacy our greed left behind.
To taste such poison and not require a chaser
Is a sadistically acquired taste.

Poems by Alyssa Irvine

Love Contest

The New Year is just beginning,
and my world it won't stop spinning.
I'm crying and I'm missing,
and you know I can't stop thinking,
of the time we almost kissed,
and then you know who walked in.
(The man who stands between us)
and my love he aims to extinguish.
And now you are out with her tonight,
and that just doesn't feel quite right.
And try as I might,
I really can't fight
for us anymore,
and I've totally lost score,
did you win or did I?

(I guess I lost because I cried.)

Far Away

You are really far away tonight.
I guess that's alright,

for now.
Come back to me,
and stay forever.
Leave all this nonsense behind.
It's unkind to leave me alone like this,
all awry and amiss.
I need to be held tonight, tomorrow and the next.
And I'm often perplexed by us when
I'm alone and adrift.
Without you I am isolated
and I have no one to come home to.

Life …

What is with life?
Always standing still?
Then stopping, then going,
doing what it will.

I can't escape it,
and neither can you.
Just make the best of it,
seeing each day thru.

Happiness, sadness,
all part of life.

Gloominess, cruelness,
sometimes just fine.

I can't escape it,
and neither can you.
Just make the best of it,
seeing each day thru.

People will always die,
and each day babies born.
Sometimes happy families,
sometimes they are torn.

I can't escape it,
and neither can you.
Just make the best of it,
seeing each day thru.

Countries at peace,
countries at war.
Some people they have plenty,
and others they need more.

Life...

I can't escape it,
and neither can you.

Just make the best of it,
making it all count for you.

Only if we Don't Play the Chase

Girls think that boys have more fun
Boys say that girls do …
So what of these two plays
are in fact true?

Boys do chase after girls
But girls are not to chase after boys!
So boys have more fun? Well, perhaps
It depends on whether you like the chase?

Boys don't need to 'be careful' do they?
But girls have to be, don't we?
Otherwise the fun is over …
Girls with big pregnant bellies
Are not chased after and can't run
fast enough to catch up
with the fathers of their babies.
Can they? The fathers keep on running …
Honestly I think that girls
have more fun … don't we?
But only if we don't
Play the chase …

If They are the Right Fit

When I meet a boy
For the first time
I like to ask them
What interests you?
If they say money
I take them shopping

After the third date
They leave me … Why?
They don't want to spend
their money on me!

If they say sports …
I take them to watch
A baseball game
And then I sneak away.
They never notice I am gone.

If they say they like films …
We usually watch the French
New Wave … each film
I know by heart. They don't
What about Truffault? Ummm …
So much for film!

If they say they are into video games
I know they have yet to grow up.
Otaku imasu … their mothers still
Look after them. No thanks!
No mothering from me please.

If they are into art then out
Comes my sketch book and
Pencils. ‘Will you sit for me?’
I ask them. Some do, most don’t

If they do I size them up …
If they are the right fit … not
too big … or only into themselves
mind you … only then do I let
them ask ‘Can I draw you too?’

I like this play …
As they size me up too.

The Walk by Karen Smith

I am the moon to guide you through the night, when it’s dark and you might need me.

I will be alone, waiting for you at night. Just waiting…

I will hear you walk through the woods, but you might not see me, but you know I am there.

I will always guide you. All you have to do is look up in the sky, even if I am covered by the clouds.

I go through many phases and sometimes you may only see a sliver of me, but remember…

There will be a time where I will shine on you and I will make sure that your path is brightened.

I will also make sure that you know your way because I don’t want you getting lost from me.

I care for you and I will protect you if you are by my side.

You might feel pain as you walk, but I will be there to help you, to guide you.

And now, as time has passed and dawn approaches, the sun will come and I must leave.

Just watching that sun rise I am amazed.

“Wow! That sun is ever so bright so how can I compare to even brighten your path?”

I know I am just as special because during the dark nights I am the one that glows, when you need me the most.

You won’t see me and you won’t hear me, but you know I am there and I will always guide you.

All you have to do is look up in the sky, even if I am covered by the clouds.

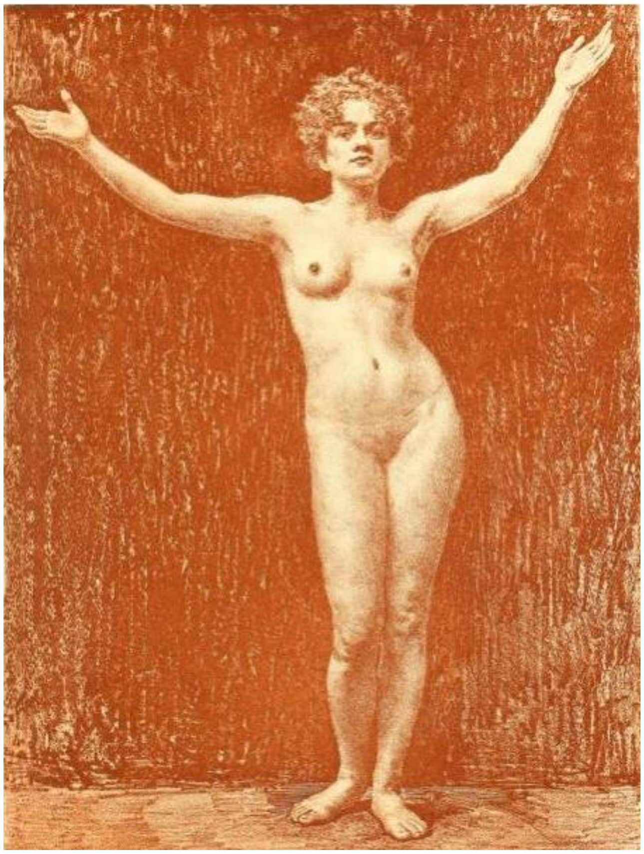
There will be a time when I will shine on you and I will make sure that your path is brightened.

I am the moon to guide you. I will guide you through the darkness to make sure you are safe.

I will lighten your path to protect you.

I am your own moon.

Pictorial: With Welcome Arms



The Crack of Lightening

The crack of lightening
The roar of thunder
It shakes me to the quick!
I am scared I always am
When the sky flashes
And Zeus lets loose!
A storm is one of my earliest remembrances
That and the warm
Embrace of my dear mother
As she wrapped her arms around me
And sang a French song
Frere Jacques, Frere Jacques
Dormer vous, Dormer Vous …
And so I slept out the storm.
Today the crack of lightening
The roar of thunder
I close my eyes and can hear her voice
Even though she is in heaven
her song comes from high
Zeus away with you
I want to hear my mother’s voice!

Poetry of the Mundane

Mercedes Benz

Lamborghini

Audi

BMW

Gucci
Versace
Coco
Louis Vitton

Champagne
Vodka
Red, white
or rosé

Hawaii

Monacco

Puerto Vallata

Cuba

Oh how ordinary …

The Bridges to Our Lives

There are three bridges to our lives

The bridge that brings us to our birth

The bridge that is our growing up

And the bridge to our eventual demise.

Just as there are three bridges
That God can send us over
Depending on who we are
and what we do with our lives

There is a that long bridge to Hell,
which is always crowded

There is a that rickety bridge to Purgatory,
which is perhaps one way

and then there is that bridge to Heaven
which is rarely ever jam-packed

There is Little of My Soul Left

Dear God,
Forgive me
For I have sinned.

I have loved
in a world filled
full of hate.

I have been gentle
when others really

only want to be mean.

I have tried to create
Heaven on Earth
but it is hell they really want.

I have tried to be kind and strong
but I have been ground
to dust instead.

Dear God,
Forgive me
For I have sinned.

There is little of my soul left
here crushed atop my cross
and crown of thorns.

A Few Words …

When I am in the mood
I sit and write poetry.
Usually it is
when I am nostalgic
or happy about life
or when I feel romantic
or when I feel troubled.

Then I share
A few words …
Here are some for you!

Are our Lives an Oxymoron?

It's our only choice
for sure …
an open secret that
each day we must
trudge, trudge, trudge
off to work!

Is this the meaning of our lives?

Isn't it forty two?

But what is the question?

Isn't it … why we trudge
to work. Here's a clue
forty-two in binary is
I O I O I O …
It's off to work we go.

OMG …
Such *deafening silence*!

Are our lives an oxymoron?
… *are we the living dead*?

There are Minotaur amongst us

Come save us … Salvador
As we dili and dali
The world has once again
become Monsterous …

Brothers kill brothers, and sisters too,
and little babes as they wait for their choo choos
to take them to safe haven.

Little angels unknowing
what sins abound about them
who get their wings far … far … far
too early as we bury them

In their loving mother's arms
The world is once again
DaDa … so horrific
So surreal!

There are Minotaur amongst us
we better all run and hide
before they eat us all alive!

Heh …Throw us a few Coins!

Almost everyone loves poetry
But darned if they'll recompense
The poet for their toil

Almost everyone has their favorite
Poet, perhaps even one who still lives
Who they walk past in the street

Not noticing their begging bowl
Not recognizing their dignity
Nor their poverty!

It is not that the poet
Will turn away your generosity
It's just …just .. its

that you just ain't generous
to begin with

Heh … throw us a few coins!

Cover girls are meant to draw
The eyes, and pence from pockets;
Those uncovered often score
A pride of place in lockets.
Connoisseurs of visual art
Make patronage a duty
When figure studies from the start
Merge artistry with beauty.
Model forms of graceful line,
Virtue unadorned displayed
Back our cover girl's design:—
Fair exchange for money paid.

Jean Straker
Visual Arts Club, Soho London

Pictorial: Visual Arts Club, Soho London



Eros in Prose

A Tribute to Stephen Hawking by Patrick Bruskiewich

Professor Hawking passed away in March, 2018.

The following tribute was sent to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University Stephen Toope to be read at Professor Hawking's wake:

Stephen Hawking is standing before the gates of heaven …

In surprise he exclaims ‘My God I am standing …’

He looks up and sees the pearly gates and wonders aloud

“But why am I here? I don't believe in God!”

At which point a voice from on high responds …

I know …
but it has been a long time
since I have had a good conversation.

No one wants to fuck Cheryl anymore. That's what she thinks. Cheryl is doing her laundry in the basement of her apartment building, sorting her *delicates* from the regular load. A Greek woman emptying the one working dryer frowns at her. Cheryl has been caught staring at her own underwear. It is the stain on a pair of gray silk panties that has brought this irrefutable truth—that no one wants to fuck her—to mind.

Cheryl wore the gray silk panties on Thursday, when James took her for dinner and then drinks back at his hotel. They "fooled around" (his words) and he came on her behind. He didn't say as much, but he wouldn't actually fuck her and she didn't expect him to. No one will anymore. It isn't safe, these days (who wants to use a condom the first time?). And, with many of the men she meets (married), it is technically verboten.

You aren't really cheating if you don't fuck. You aren't doing anything dangerous. Cheryl knows this is what James thinks.

If his wife ever asks, "did you fuck her?" He can rightly answer no! He might, depending on the depth of his character, even add, Of course not!

A blow job is okay. Cheryl gave James a blow job when they fooled around again an hour after the panty stain, just like she gave Tom at that Christmas party and Steve at the beach. Tom also rubbed his dick between her round, wet breasts (he'd poured Chardonnay between them); Steve stuck his fingers so far up inside her, she remembered her next doctor's appointment. All of them licked her and rubbed her

and squeezed the cheeks of her ass. They did everything they could think of—after all, they weren't inhibited—everything except fuck.

The laundry room is empty now. Cheryl lifts the gray silk panties from the small pile of her *delicates* and holds them to her face. She tries to smell James, tries to remember the thrilling skip of her breath when he reached for her hand beneath the table, tries to remember the look in his eyes she thought meant he wanted her. As in *really*.

Cheryl breathes deeply, and though the panties smell more like the musty bottom of her bathroom hamper than anything else, she remembers James' skin.

She remembers her face pressed into his neck when he told her that she couldn't spend the night.

And when at last she tosses the gray silks into the washing machine, another stain has blotted out the first.

Something is Missing from Paradise by Patrick Bruskiewich

"After almost creating Paradise on Earth, God … annoyed by the cries of the Cicada … and tired out by six days of earnest effort took a break and spent Sunday pondering Pure Mathematics.

God knew that Pure Mathematics had few practical applications and thought it would be pleasant to do some applied mathematics … geometry in fact …

Something is missing from Paradise God thought … so starting with straight lines, rectangles and cylinders… he unravelled things …

God set upon his penultimate design, quickly got bored, borrowed a few bones from man's rib cage and said,

Time to move onto spheres, pleasant curves and topology …

Perhaps that's how God came by creating woman after man?

For him sex and romance were literary categories.

As they undressed in her bedroom, the idea of "taking the heaven from inside of her and turning it into a burnt wheat field" popped into his head. It was a desperate thought, really. He loosened his tie. Something in him was strangling. She waited on the bed in her underwear, rubbing her feet together playfully.

During puberty and his early '20s, he'd read so many books before his nine o'clock bedtime that, he assured himself, without doubt, even though he'd never had one in the flesh, he'd had plenty of girls by proxy.

He had been cocky from the first day of their relationship. He had actually asked her out. An old man had tripped on some broken concrete in front of his house. She had come to the rescue and had asked to use his phone to call the old man's son. He thought, "kindness floated on her like mist over London." She seemed accessible to him.

On their third date she had asked him, "Are you a playful little boy?"

He had never been winked at like that before. He could tell she conducted these matters on eye-to-eye ground. Obviously, he was not on that level. But the fact that she assumed he was made him sit straight and smile.

Up to this point he had likened their relationship to a white water river. Tonight, on the way to her house, he felt like he was going over the falls.

Now, nearly naked, he watched her wiggle and mess up the bed sheets. Those luxurious wrinkles bothered him. He caught the view of the two of them in the mirror above her dresser. In a scene like this, he wondered, how could any man worry? The fact that he worried distressed him even more.

“What’s the matter?” A stray chocolate brown curl flopped over her eye.

He felt like a harried plate spinner. His hesitation to start “The Carnival of Love” allowing a few plates to fall.

“What about this? Maybe this will speed up the race.” She proficiently kicked off her panties and undid her bra. The sight of her wearing nothing gave him what he called the “*Raskolnikov Shakes*.”

Her pubic hair didn’t seem as confined and tamed as it was in paintings he had seen. Her breasts were flatter than all those statues had brought him to expect.

“You’re shaking.”

“Ah, I’m not…” He felt more exposed than he would have if he’d actually removed his boxers. Now that all was laid bare, he flashed on their future together. The practicality of the relationship certainly wouldn’t change. But he questioned if she would still smile the same light-bending hello? Would they still have the same coy conversations?

Like a flash of lightning in a storm, a Raymond Chandler quote occurred to him. “Beyond fear, beyond change.” It was a description of a dead guy.

Pictorial: Surreal Art, Soho London, circa 1950



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Editor in Chief: Patrick Bruskiewich

Thighs Like Fresh Peaches by Patti See

When you lay your bag of groceries on the wooden bar top, your milk and bread and fruit remind you that you have parents and children, somewhere.

Each bartender knows your face by what you drink, and this one sets a mug of beer before you and a bourbon for your lover. You are a couple only here, this place with pool cues in a barrel in the middle of the barroom and Bessie Smith on the jukebox. The regulars know your movements, hands in a strange gesture they mimic a table away. They guess the secrets you keep together, know from the way you walked in tonight—snow-caked scarves and steamed glasses—the songs you'll play again, standing shoulder to shoulder, as close to dancing as any public place allows.

You chose the fruit together at a corner grocery store. Your lover held each piece to his nose, turned each one round in his hand. He said, "We've never shopped for real groceries together." A melodrama only you and he appreciate. When you walked along the street to the bar, biting into your fruit, the nectar ran down your arms, soaking your coat sleeves to bare wrists. Later tonight, in bed beside your husband, you will remember a skin that gives and takes.

You held the fruit to your lover's face and rubbed the fuzz to his cheek. You started to say, "Winter thighs like mine." Instead came out, "It's summer somewhere."

At the bar with peach pits in your pocket, you imagine how you might be different without these other lives, when you're together fulltime. He will say Just three drinks and mean it. Your hives will disappear. He won't need Ziploc baggies of homegrown

skunkweed to write your story the way you tell favorite parts to each other in a dark booth.

Mornings you will wake with him and fit everything in. Groceries and pets. Children and jobs. Every conversation mystical and true; odd seams between finished and start anew.

Tonight the surfer boy bartender will leave a paper sack for him, folded like a Valentine, on the edge of the bar. You slip it into your bag of fruit, tell yourself it is medicinal and thereby nearly healthy. When your lover slips to the men's room, you imagine his dried plants, as you've seen them before when he rolls a joint on your belly, tongues the remnants from your navel, lovely as the parsley you sprinkle on your husband's pasta. Within minutes a single hundred-dollar bill has been passed from hand to hand before the urinal. Your lover reappears wearing his coat and hat, your parka draped over his arm.

You stop a block from his house and kiss him in your cold car. In the darkness his mouth is a living thing, each kiss eats back. Your husband will never know the story of your night. His wife has no way of knowing he's carrying home a bag of poems.

You must have seen her when you lived on the islands. Her jeans were faded and embroidered. She wore plastic sandals and carried a guitar. She never went to school. She went to visit sick friends or to the beach. What was the funniest thing you ever said to her? Did it make her laugh? When she laughed, did she tilt her head back and open her mouth so wide you could see all her white teeth? If she tipped her head back, her hair would touch her thighs; it would sweep against them as your hand ached to.

Did you hear her sing? When she sang in one of the tourist bars I would go to see her. I would sit in the shadows and drink, my arm over another girl's shoulder.

I wish I had the foresight to bring a tape recorder with me, but I didn't. I have to close my eyes and listen hard now to hear her voice, and often it gets confused with the wind in the trees.

How old would she be now? It doesn't matter. I don't care—to me she'll always be a teenager with her mouth folded in defiance.

I'll tell you a secret.

One day, when we were lying in bed talking, my mother came home from work to check on me. I was supposed to be ill. I was home from school. There was no time to hide; she barely had time to dart under my covers before my mother came in and sat down on my bed. My mother never knew I had a girl, unclad, huddled next to my

body. She was so lithe, so slender, that her body melded with mine, the covers stayed obediently bunched over her head, and my mother never noticed a thing.

She put her hand on my brow (damp with sweat and burning with effrontery) and told me I looked flushed. She left after bringing me a cup of tea and some toast. All the while there was a naked girl in my bed, pressed as closely to me as a salamander. When my mother's car drove away I pushed the covers back and smiled at her. She started laughing. I didn't love her yet, but it was a start.

I went to see her in New York City after she'd left the islands. She had cast off her tattered, harlequin jeans and wore a warm sweater. It made her look fragile.

She went with me to a party, and she didn't drink—she never drank. She liked to smoke, though—to get stoned—and by the end of the evening, her smile was as wide as the Hudson River. I tried to talk her into coming back with me to the apartment I'd rented, but she shook her head.

She kissed me softly on the mouth, but she was the type to close doors behind her and never open them again.

When she got in the car Anna has said Hello or Dzien Dobre – good day in Polish – to my uncle and the two of them had immediately struck up a conversation in Polish, leaving me the odd man out, since I did not speak the language.

As we drove in the direction of her home Anna turned to me and said that she asked her mother whether she could spend part of the day with me instead of going straight home. I was in the front seat and she was in the back of my uncle's old brown Buick and so my uncle heard the whole conversation. She said she could be picked up in the middle of the afternoon, if that was more convenient for me.

My uncle said something in Polish and Anna smiled and so I assumed it was fine by him and I said it was ok, if it was ok for my aunt and uncle. My uncle turned to me and said that my aunt and uncle would enjoy the visit, and the chance to meet one of my Polish school friends. My aunt could not speak English but I was not immediately suspicious of what mischief the two could get into, at my expense.

I smirked at Anna and she mockingly smirked back. I wanted to defuse the moment and so I asked my uncle to turn on the radio. His old Buick was from the 1950's and so it did not have a solid state radio. It had old radio tubes. When you turned the radio on it took several seconds to warm up before any sound was heard. In those few seconds a hum filled the car with its neutral tone.

Then the radio sprang to life with Christmas music. The crooner Bing Crosby filled the car with I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas. As I looked out the window I thought, how appropriate.

Anna and my uncle continued talking in Polish as we drove through the older parts of Edmonton, down a side street and then down into a ravine. Then Anna got concerned. “Where are we going?”

“Oh,” I paused for effect, “down to an old coal mine where my aunt and uncle live as the custodians.”

“A coal mine!” She was honestly astounded.

“Yes, a coal mine. My grandfather and uncle use to work here, but since the late 1950’s this mine has been closed because no one needs coal anymore to heat their homes.”

“I didn’t know there were coal mines in the city.” My uncle said something to Anna in Polish and along they went probably talking about the coal mine.

The declivity down the ravine to the coal mine had been freshly plowed by my uncle right down to the gravel roadbed. His vintage 1940’s three ton truck was no longer used to deliver coal, but to do sundry things like plow the road after a snow storm. Once we got onto the rock road bed it was smooth sailing down into the ravine and into a parking space near the main building. Most of the parking lot was untouched by the plow and had a good meter of snow.

The main building was a non-descript one storey building with dark green trim and painted white walls. Across the parking lot, in the shadow of the south ravine was a quaint log cabin. Dark smoke drifted up from the chimney in the cabin, telling all

for miles around that the building was occupied and in use. This is where my aunt and uncle lived. Feeding the chimney was a cast iron stove, fed with coal from the coal bin, and heating the cabin quite handily.

We alighted from the old Buick, stepping into knee high fresh snow. It always snowed more near the North Saskatchewan River than it did in the city itself. It had something to do with the lower elevation, and the cold air and the moisture wafting up from the swiftly moving waters near the mine. The ravine was once a meander of the North Saskatchewan River but had been pinched off. Eons ago the river stopped flowing through this neck of the woods, but not before it had eroded away enough of the surface soil to lay bare the veins of hard coal. On the side of the ravine coal seams were seen to be poking out. In the summers when I visited I not only searched for choice pieces of hard coal, but the occasional fossil which I trade my classmates for things like comic books or chocolate bars.

We trekked across the parking lot to the front of the cabin. It was a challenging trek for me in pants. It was even more challenging for Anna who was wearing a dress and tights. My uncle took the lead, then I walked a few steps behind him but ahead of her and tried to clear a path for her. She walked along until she suddenly stopped. I could not hear her foots steps and turned around. She was looking around the site of the old coal mine.

My uncles stopped too and looked perplexed at the two of us. He said something in Polish to her and she said something back and then proceeded on his walk to the log cabin.

I stood for a few seconds confused. Then I asked “what’s wrong?”

“I asked your uncle if he would let us walk around and explore a bit. I have never visited a coal mine before.”

“What did he say?”

Your uncle said to be careful and don’t go down into the mine shaft.

I looked at her for a few seconds before I said “you are full of surprises.”

“Am I,” she responded but with a distant haughtiness. She was turning her head and looking slowly around the yard. I followed her eyes around the parking lot and realized she was studying the fence. It was a sturdy wire fence, held up by wooden posts every twenty feet or so, and topped with coiled barbed wire. There had been some vandalizing of equipment and trespassing of the coal mine and for matter of safety the facility had been fenced off and topped with barbed wire.

Then her eyes fixated on the entrance of the coal mine. There was a large gate that drew into the parking lot. The gate was swung closed and locked each night at dusk and swung opened again each morning at dawn. It was part and parcel of my uncle’s routine.

Above the gate there was the arc of a long faded sign. It was a matter of perhaps a high wind before it came crashing down. The last time we had visited my father had asked for the sign to be taken down before it fell and hurt someone. When he was a bit older than I was then he had been the one to help paint and hang the sign. It was his job to check the spelling that one of the Polish workers painting the sign was to

use and of course there is a typo which had been the amusement of all who had visited the coal mine. He had replaced the e in mine with a d. No one ever thought of fixing the mistake. The workers took to calling him coal mind.

Everyone's father was a boy once. I knew the story because my uncle had told it to me, but he had also sworn me to secrecy … My father wanted the sign taken down to fix the mistake for good. He wanted to take the sign down, break it apart and throw it into the giant incinerator that was off in the corner of the yard. When we drove in Anna had not noticed the sign and I did not bother to share the joke. She had noticed the incinerator. It was made out of bricks and had a high chimney. The front of it had a large cast iron door which was swung and left open. You could see a dark abyss within it.

Around the base of the fence you could see where my uncle had marched on his sentry duty to see that all was right with the place. For one man to look after the abandoned coal mine was difficult. But my uncle was use to such rigors. He had grown up on a farm east of Krakow in southeastern Poland.

As a young man of twenty he had been a sergeant in the Polish Army in 1939, stationed on the eastern part of Poland which had been invaded by the Red Army in 1939. He had been captured and interned in a Soviet Gulag, along with some 6,600 of his N.C.O. and conscript compatriots and left their to wither away by the Soviets. Stalin hated Poles more than any others. In the gulag the Soviets were using the prisoners as forced laborers to build a new railroad to the Urals. The prisoners were told hard work would make them free. Cynically later in the war the survivors would remember this as *Arbeit Macht Frei* …

My uncle's officers had been systematically murdered by the Soviet at Katyn near Smolensk in 1940, as had his mother, my great-grandmother. She had been a stubborn and outspoken woman who merely wanted to know what had become of her beloved sons William and Vincent. She so angered a NKVD major that he drew his pistol and nearly shot her on the spot in full view of his troops. When he calmed down a bit he scribbled something on a piece of paper, handed it to one of the Soviet soldiers and sent my great-grandmother to her death at Katyn. That soldier would later fight beside my uncle and tell him the story of his mother's martyrdom.

In the summer of 1943 the Nazis had found the mass grave of Polish Officers at Katyn and used it to their advantage. They got the neutral Swedes and the Swiss to compile a list of the dead and publicized this fact on behalf of the International Red Cross. The NKVD officer that had martyred my great-grandmother never made it through the war. He was shot by the Soviets for 'cowardice.' More likely the Soviets were just covering their tracks and tying up loose political ends. It was only in 1991 that Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev would apologize to the world for the Katyn massacre.

In the spring of 1942 when the NKVD arrived at their Gulag they told them they had a singular choice – '*come fight the Ghhermans with us or we shoot you here and now*.' How could one refuse such an offer at the muzzle of a machine-pistol. When they were told this, this was the first time that my uncle and the other Polish prisoners had heard the Nazis had invaded Russia. That day the Soviets became the lesser of two evils. Of the 6,600 soldiers who set out on their crusade to free Poland that day only 600 survived the Nazis and the Soviets by the end of May 1945.

The Nazis fought like demons, but the Soviets had their own twisted sense of propriety – they would march their ‘comrades’ in front of the T-34 tanks through mine fields to save the tank from the mines. What was the death of one Polish soldier compared to the saving of a Soviet tank and its tank four man Soviet crew. It was the Soviet version of being a superior race. But ask any Soviet and they will tell you the Poles fought like lions and the Nazis feared the Poles more than they feared the Soviets. It was the same on the Western Front. Where the Poles fought the Germans, the Aryans trembled.

When they invaded Poland in September 1939 the Nazis had gone out of their way to treat Poles like sub-humans. My uncle told me that as they invaded the German’s had a marching song that said that *the only good pole is a dead one*. Now the Nazis were receiving their comeuppance. Very little quarter was given to them in the heat of battle.

My uncle met my aunt one cold winter afternoon in 1943 when she was commanding a Soviet T-34 tank. She let the Polish soldiers ride on her tank and it was love at first sight. My aunt had been a rather proficient Panzer buster. She could put a 76 mm round down the barrel of a German tank at a thousand yards. She could knock the tread off a Panzer at a mile. She was so proficient at her job that the Soviets let her make up her own rules of engagement in this game of cat and mouse.

And so she let the soldiers ride on her tank. For some reason the Germans would hesitate to fire their antitank weapons if they saw men hanging on the outside of a Soviet Tank, deciding to use their machine guns instead. This meant they could close the distance. And so she used that to her advantage. In that game of Cat and Mouse the tanker who fired first had a better than even chance at winning the match. If you

were as good as my aunt was, it was closer to 90 %. She also had an innate understanding of German field tactics and so she escaped the murderous fire of the 88 mm guns. She was the gem of Rokossovsky’s army.

And at night she was never for want of company. She was allowed to keep a gather of a dozen foot soldiers as her protectors – a sort of male seraglio. One of my aunt’s most infamous expressions was “you only live once, and once is not enough.” It is a wonder she didn’t get pregnant while driving her tank.

Between battle after battle, across the wide and flat expanses of Eastern Europe, my aunt and uncle would romance from Lvov, to Krakow and on to the Elbe. He was a tall and handsome fellow. She had been a petite beauty. She lost three T-34’s and several crews under her but somehow she managed to survive. It was not sheer luck but an inner wisdom that one could not put into words.

Her last T-34 she lost when at the outskirts of Dresden three Tiger tanks tried to maul her. In a street battle that lasted nearly two hours she took them all out. One she put a round down the barrel. The second she caught it by the ass and destroyed its diesel and in the third battle she brought the building it was crouching in down up on the Tiger. I doubt they were able to dig the crew out. It was then that her tank was taken out by a German soldier with a Panzer Faust.

Her crew survived the bazooka round and chased the German soldier for the rest of the afternoon before cornering him and finishing him off. I guess I should tell you, that T-34 had an all woman crew. They raped him, then emasculated the boy and threw him out of a second story window. He was dragged away and perhaps

survived. My aunt was not there to tame her crew. She had suffered a concussion from the Panzer Faust and was sleeping it off in my uncle's arms.

My aunt and uncle fought alongside each other for eighteen months. By the time they got to the Elbe they were engaged. Along the way they would liberate Birkenau and Auschwitz. I had told Anna this story a week or two before and she has listened quietly. Inside I knew this was a reason for Anna wanting to meet them. That afternoon Anna had told me that her mother and grandmother had been internees at Auschwitz.

It was when Anna started to walk towards the main building that this brought me out of my daydream. The snow crunched under her feet. Her pace was rapid and deliberate. She took no notice of me. It took some effort on my part to catch up with her.

She got to the stairs before I did and opened the door. The door swung freely open. I was surprised it was unlocked. She flicked on the light and stepped inside the antechamber. She took several steps in and stopped. It was when she stopped that I entered the room behind her. I stood without making a sound. I watched her closely. She moved as in a trance.

The main building housed the change rooms and showers. It was colder inside the building then outside. You could see your breath in the starkness of the three light bulbs that ran the oblique length of the room.

The Anna started to do something I had not expected. She unwrapped the scarf from around her neck and let it fall to the floor. Then she unbuttoned her coat and let it fall too. In the middle of the room she started to undress.

“What are you doing Anna?” She didn’t hear me. I walked rapidly to in front of her and grabbed her arms. She did not seem to see me. She pushed my hands away and struggled free and continued to undress. Her dress dropped to the floor. She stood in front of me in her brassiere, panties and tights. She kicked off her shoes.

“Anna … Anna!” Still she didn’t hear or see me. Her eyes were mad. They looked around as if she were not alone in the room. She started to cry as she took her brassiere off and let it fall to the floor onto the stack of her clothes.

“Stop … what’s wrong?” I started to feel a fear that she was having an episode or something. She said something in Polish. I did not understand what she said.

Then down came her tights. She bundled them up and then tucked them into her clothes and stood for a second in her panties. I could feel her body heat standing next to her. She was looking up at a make-believe person next to her and speaking softly in Polish. I did not know what she said but I suddenly understood what was happening. Her mother had been her age when she had arrived in Auschwitz. Anna was recreating the trauma of the arrival.

At that moment she wasn’t in my world anymore and so I did not know what else I could do then to start taking off my clothes and joining her in her nightmare. If I did not do this she would be all but alone in her trauma. I wondered if her solitude would break her.

It was very cold in that room. I was glad that my boyness all but tucked itself in me. Never had I felt more vulnerable than then. She looked at me then dropped her panties and took my hand and led me into the next room. Her steps were hesitant and knowing. She feared what was in the next room. We got to the door and stopped. She flicked on the lights and only two bulbs, one near the door and one at the far end came on.

Midway in the room there was a shower fixture that dripped onto the floor below. There was a stalagmite icicle growing up from the floor. It glowed in the dim light of the room.

As we stood at the door I looked at her. Her skin was soft and pink. Her small breasts were majestic in my eyes. They seemed to have grown in the space of a few minutes. Her femininity was more pronounced then it was when I glimpsed it yesterday. It had the shape and colour of pink tulips. I could see a small swelling in the midst of her that I had not seen before – a sort of girl penis, if such a thing existed. In the midst of the garishness of things she was very incredibly beautiful.

I squeezed her hand and she held my hand even tighter. She was about to take a step into the room when something seemed to hold he back and she stepped back into the antechamber. And there we stood for a few minutes at the door to the showers, listening to the drip, drip, drip of the water under the stalagmite.

I started to shiver. But there she stood aglow and in her own world. “Anna …” still no response. When I said her name she squeezed my hand even more. My fingers

began to hurt under her grasp. But I didn't say anything. If she could survive the cold, I could for her sake.

We probably would have stood there for many more minutes were it not for a word being yelled out by my aunt. "Dziechi! …. Dziechi! …" It was Polish for children … children.

Anna started to relax her grasp on me and she began to return to my world from her world. Then she came too and noticed that we were both standing there at the door to the shower room naked like the day we were born. She looked at me and started to cry. What else could I do but bring her close to me and hug her. "Everything will be all right Anna."

"Dziechi! …. Dziechi! …"

She started to shiver. She felt so warm so I knew it was not the cold that was causing this. It was fear.

"Anna … are you ok? Where were you just now?"

She looked at me with scared eyes. "My mother and grandmother told me all their stories about being at Auschwitz."

"Is that where you were just now?" I asked her.

She nodded. "We are not there now …" I tried to sound so convincingly as I said this. "We are here in Edmonton and it is 1973!"

She held me even closer. Her breasts pressed against me. I began to stir. For a boy it is almost automatic. I felt the awkwardness of this as my boyhood crept up her leg.

She started to whisper in my ear. “My mother and grandmother where sent to Auschwitz in the fall of 1943. The day they arrived they were to be marched into the showers … but were saved at the last moment by an SS officer.”

“Saved?” I asked.

“My mother and grandmother are tall, blonde and had blue eyes. He pulled them aside and the officer asked my grandmother some questions. They came from a part of Poland, Silesia, that had many German migrants. My grandmother and mother could speak German and so she told him a white lie – that her grandparents came from Germany.”

She stopped and looked at me. She felt me between her legs and did not seem to mind. I was now fully erect and so she pushed her pelvis closer to mine and our intimacy was all but complete.

“The officer asked her what my grandmother did. She said had been a nurse and mid-wife in Wroclaw. When he asked about my mother she told him she was a nurse’s assistant. This is what saved their life!”

My backside was chilled but my front was not. In the distance I could hear my aunt calling us again. “I think we should dress and go back.”

Then Anna did another unexpected thing. She kissed me passionately on the lips and not just for a second or two but for a good fifteen seconds. As she did this the furnace within her burned even more warmly.

She then danced upwards on her toes a few millimeters until her tulip was just touching the bud of me. As we stood precariously we were both at the portico of life. I dropped myself down a touch and then I was being caressed by the most incredible silkiness of life. Her soft skin touching my soft skin. There we stood for a moment both unsure. Then the kiss was over as was the temptation.

I was glad. She turned away and started to dress. We were back in the real and the present. My clothes were stone cold when I put them on. Strangely I had felt warmer without them on. Once again I had to catch up with her and gladly we were very much ourselves when in the doorway of the building my uncle appeared, no wiser to what we had just been through.

"Your aunt has been calling you. Where have you been?" he asked us sternly.

Anna said something in Polish and my uncle turned back out of the door and started to walk back to the cabin.

We both walked to the door and stopped. She took my hand and gave it a tight squeeze.

"What did you say?"

"Here and now …"

We walked slowly back to the cabin. The smoke rising from its chimney was beckoning. But she took her time and spoke as we walked.

“At Auschwitz there was a ward in the hospital just for pregnant woman. There was a Polish mid-wife there named Stanislawa Leszczynska who delivered over 3,000 babies from 1942 to 1945. My grandmother and mother worked in that ward from 1943 helping to deliver about 1,500 babies. It was hard for them to do.”

“Why?”

“After the mothers gave birth to their babies the woman were sent to the showers that very same day by the chief Doctor, Mengeles.”

“My god – that’s monstrous! What happened to the babies?”

“If it was a healthy girl it was sent for adoption in Germany.”

I paused before asking, because I didn’t really want to know. Anna looked at me but stayed silent.

“Do I want to know what happened to the little baby boys?” She shook her head.

We walked along a few more steps before she said something else. “In 1944 there was a bad typhus epidemic in Auschwitz. My grandmother came down with it and my mother nursed her back to health. Then my mother came down with Typhus.

One morning when she had yet to recover Herr Doktor Mengele came to do his rounds. If you were not well enough to work he sent you to be gassed.

My mother had not been out of bed for a week, but that morning she stood all by herself next to her bed and did not move an inch as Mengele stopped at her bedside and looked both at her and the empty bed. She smiled back as he asked her where the patient was who had been in that bed.

“She’s not here anymore Doktor. I am to here to change the sheets.” Mengele finished his rest of his rounds and left the ward. “My mother had lied her way out of death.”

As she finished her story we stepped up onto the porch of the log cabin. My aunt had been waiting for us and ushered us both in. Giving both Anna and I a big hug. My aunt took one look at Anna and knew she was chilled to the bone and so she took helped her out of her scarf and coat and towards the bathroom. She said something to my uncle who lifted a large pot of boiling water off the coal stove and into the bath room. When he reappeared the pot was empty and he handed me the pot and said go get some water.

I turned around and walked out to the hand pump beside their cabin and pumped the handle a good five or six times before water issued from the spout. It took me several trips before the bath tub was filled with the right mix of hot and cold, then the pot was put back on the stove and a smaller bucket handed me. I think I made seven or eight trips in all. By the time I was told there was enough water I was sweating under the exertion. I did not mind. I was doing this for my friend.

On the stove was set the pot and water was being boiled for my bath. My aunt said something to my uncle in Polish and my uncle, who was sitting comfortably in his chair next to the stove said something back. Then Anna said something in Polish from with the bathroom and my uncle smiled. My aunt asked Anna something and Anna said something back and before I knew it my aunt had taken me by the hand and had walked me into the bathroom and closed behind me.

There was Anna in the bath. She smiled at me. “You aunt asked you uncle to get water for your bath. He didn’t want to get water for your bath and so I said you could share my bath water.”

“Your aunt thought this was funny. You uncle doesn’t care …. Just don’t make babies he said.”

Just before I was to step into the bath my aunt appeared with another ladle of hot water. I bashfully covered myself. She said something to Anna, who giggled in response.

“What did my aunt say?”

“She said we would make a lovely couple.”

My aunt looked down at my hands and laughed. Without asking Anna translated what my aunt said. “Don’t be bashful … it’s not as if I will see something I haven’t seen. I have had several babies for god sake.”

My aunt pointed to the bath. “Get in before the water gets cold.”

Oh well so much for modesty. I obliged. I slowly and carefully stepped into the bath. The water was painfully hot on my frigid skin. When I was finally fully in the bathtub then we were once again alone.

I sat in front of her, between her legs, leaning forward. Behind me I could feel her hands on my cold back. “Let me I wash your back,” she said.

The touch of her hands, and the slippery warmth of the soapy water, was indescribable. Where moments before we had been at the gates of hell, here within our own beloved world we were now in heaven.

When she was finished washing my back I leaned back against her. Her breasts once again pressed against me and once again I stirred. She placed her hands on my stomach. I placed mine on her knees. Somehow I knew that that moment would bring her happiness for the wholeness of her life.

She had fingernails painted with pink polish. Seeing such feminine hands so close to the maleness of me meant that I stayed stirred for a very, very, very long time. No doubt hidden behind me, out of my view, was a similar arousal. It was love between boy and girl without intercourse.

Quietly we enjoyed our bath uninterrupted until we both felt it was time for us to rejoin the rest of the world. Eventually there was a knock on the door and my aunt asking whether we were hungry. She had made us Borscht.

Anna whispered into my ear. “It is a pity we could not stay in the here and now.” I turned my head and looked back at her as she said this. We kissed. Anna looked wonderfully happy. Her trauma was behind her.

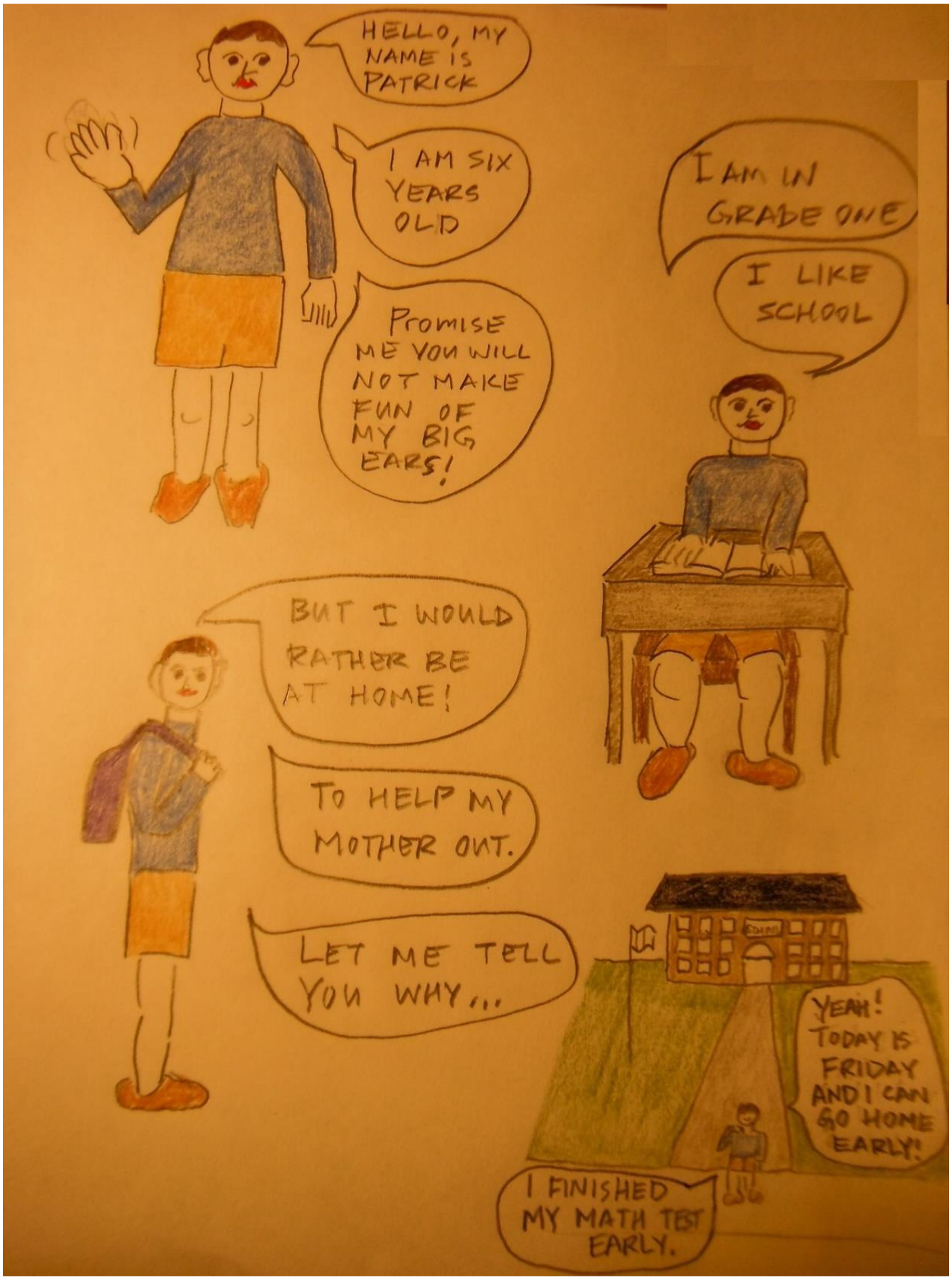
She had nothing to be sad about … and neither did I.

Pictorial: Something to reflect upon

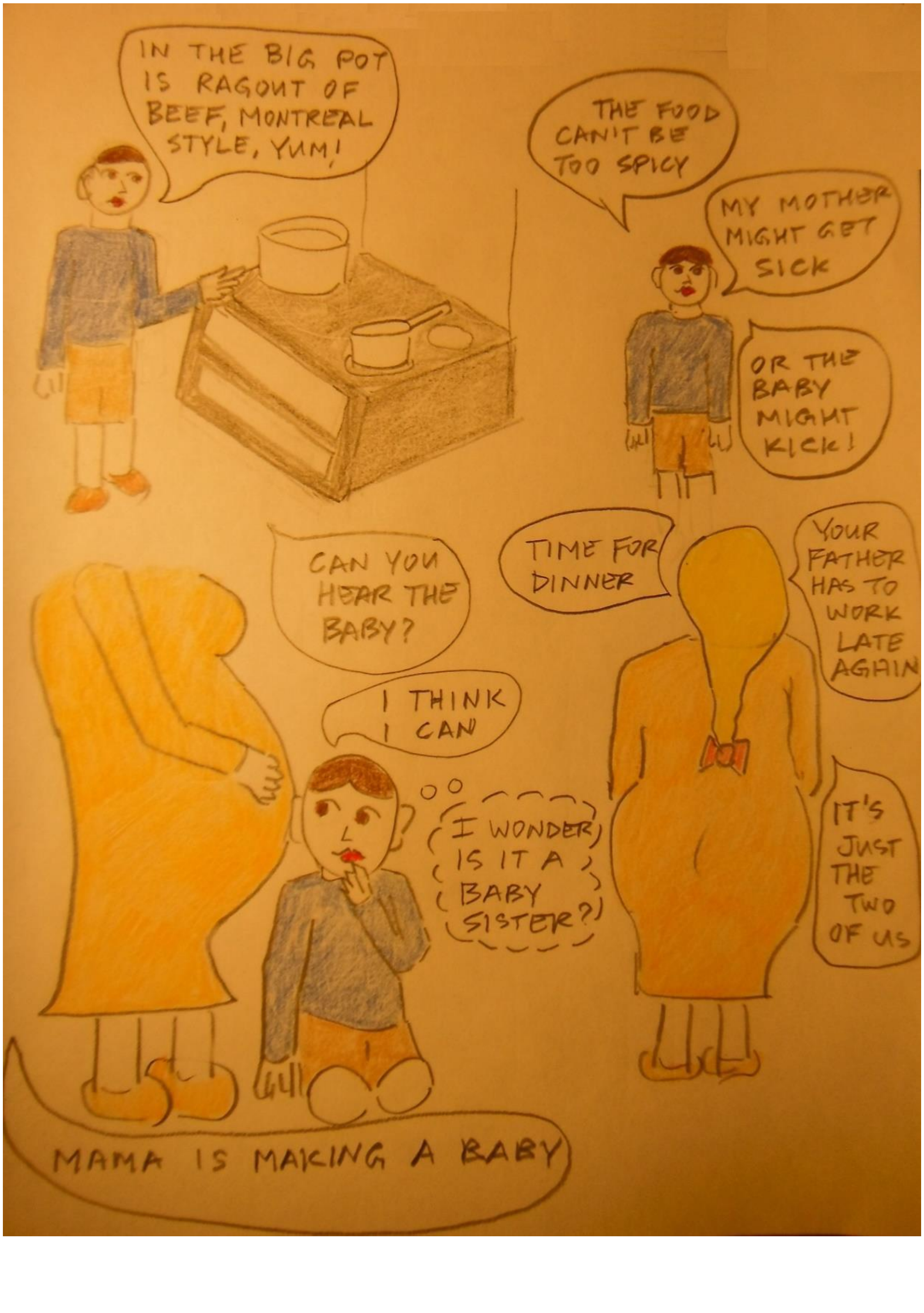


Eros in Art

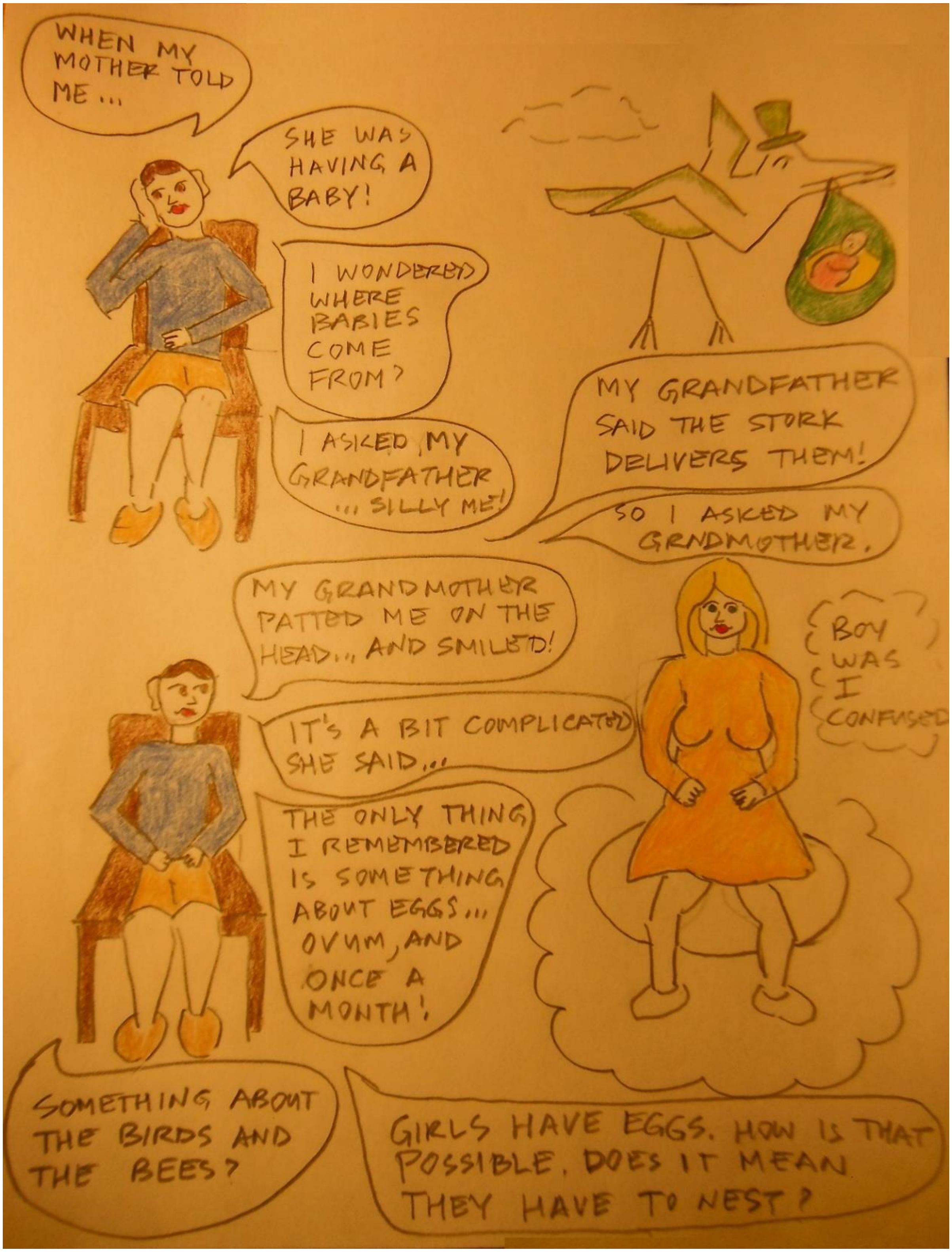
Mamma Is Having a Baby! by Patrick Bruskiewich

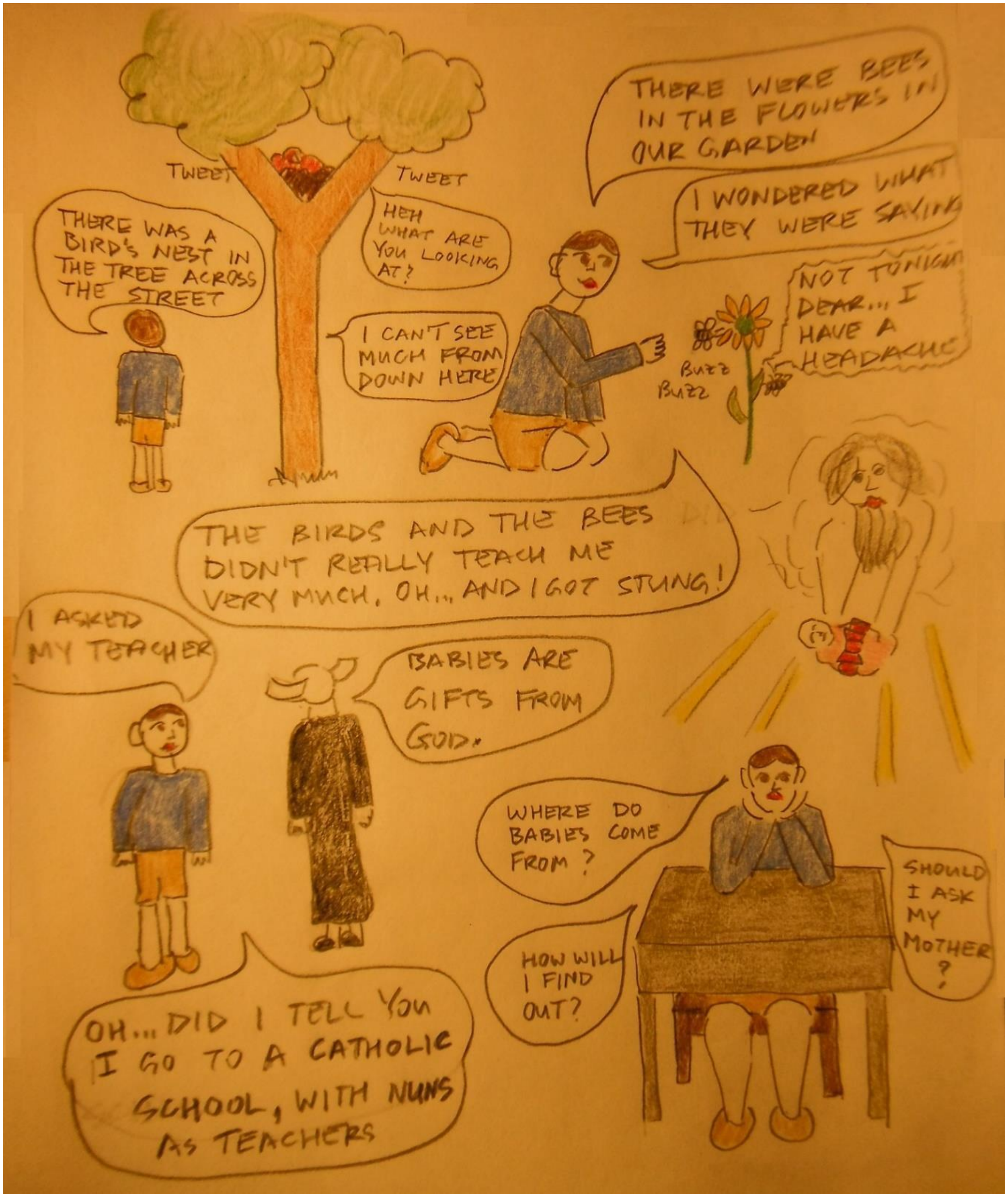



MY MOTHER IS EXPECTING A BABY!
PATRICK IT IS NOT POLITE TO POINT!
I'M SORRY... MOM
COME HELP ME IN THE KITCHEN TO MAKE DINNER
YES MOTHER!
MY MOTHER'S TUMMY IS SO BIG SHE CAN'T REACH ANYTHING.
RICE
SO SHE LET'S ME COOK!
I AM MAKING RICE.
COOKING IS HARD WORK!
GOING TO SCHOOL IS EASY!
CLEANING TOO
WHERE IS THE BROOM!
CRUNCH CRUNCH
OOPS.


IN THE BIG POT IS RAGOUT OF BEEF, MONTREAL STYLE, YUM!
THE FOOD CAN'T BE TOO SPICY
MY MOTHER MIGHT GET SICK
OR THE BABY MIGHT KICK!
CAN YOU HEAR THE BABY?
I THINK I CAN
I WONDER IS IT A BABY SISTER?
TIME FOR DINNER
YOUR FATHER HAS TO WORK LATE AGAIN
IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US
MAMA IS MAKING A BABY


IT WAS IN THE SPRING THAT MY MOTHER KNEW THERE WAS A BABY IN HER TUMMY
MOM ARE YOU ALL-RIGHT
BARF
KNOCK KNOCK
EVERY MORNING MOM GOT SICK!
I NEED TO PEE!
AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINING.
POOR MOM
MAKING A BABY IS HARD WORK!
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP?
JUST BE A GOOD BOY. MAMA IS NOT FEELING WELL.
YES MOM! I WILL BE A GOOD BOY.

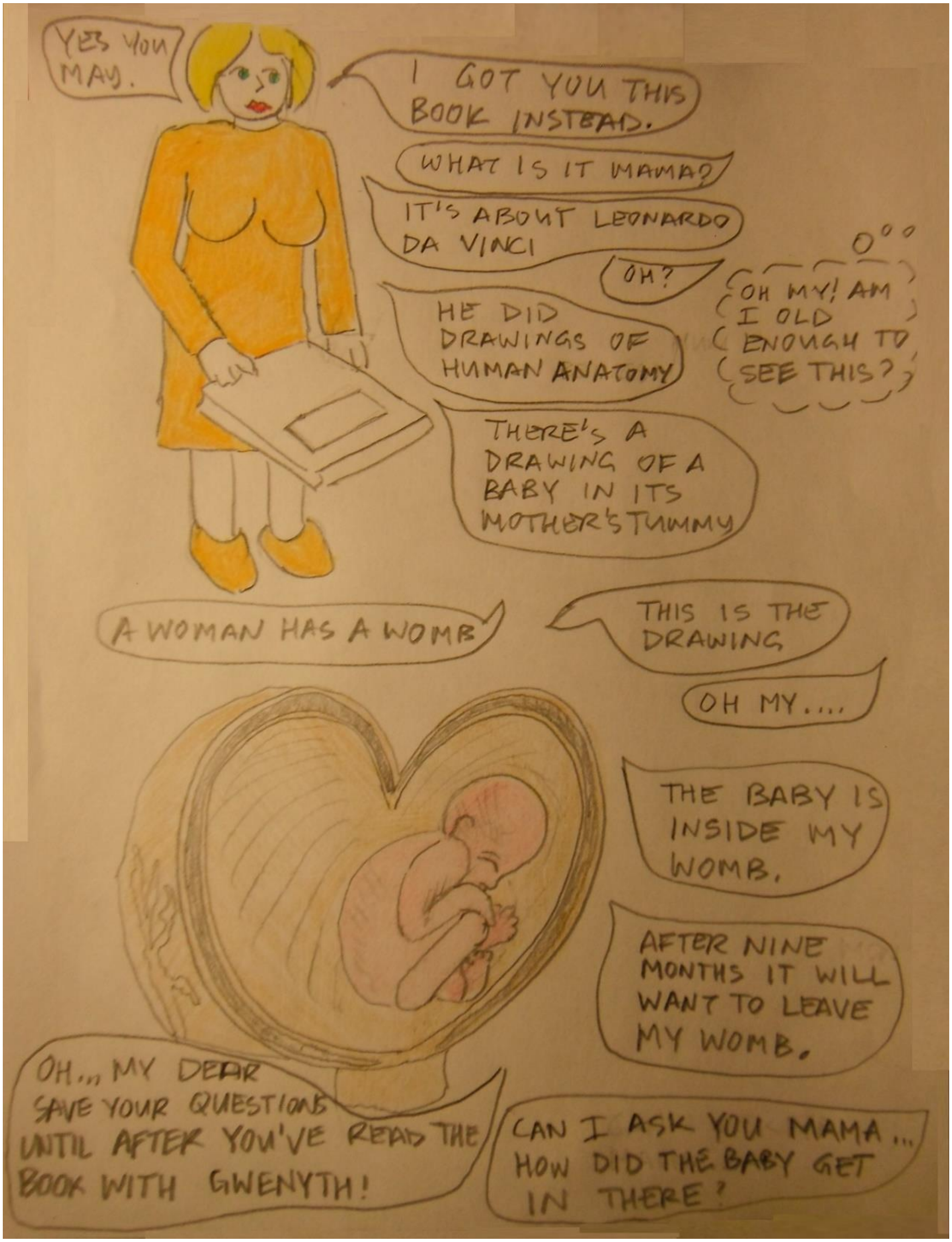

WHEN MY MOTHER TOLD ME...
SHE WAS HAVING A BABY!
I WONDERED WHERE BABIES COME FROM?
I ASKED MY GRANDFATHER ... SILLY ME!
MY GRANDFATHER SAID THE STORK DELIVERS THEM!
SO I ASKED MY GRNDMOTHER.
MY GRANDMOTHER PATTED ME ON THE HEAD... AND SMILED!
IT'S A BIT COMPLICATED SHE SAID...
THE ONLY THING I REMEMBERED IS SOMETHING ABOUT EGGS... OVUM, AND ONCE A MONTH!
BOY WAS I CONFUSED
SOMETHING ABOUT THE BIRDS AND THE BEES?
GIRLS HAVE EGGS. HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE. DOES IT MEAN THEY HAVE TO NEST?


TWEET
TWEET
THERE WAS A BIRD'S NEST IN THE TREE ACROSS THE STREET
HEH WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
I CAN'T SEE MUCH FROM DOWN HERE
THERE WERE BEES IN THE FLOWERS IN OUR GARDEN
I WONDERED WHAT THEY WERE SAYING
NOT TONIGHT DEAR... I HAVE A HEADACHE
BUZZ BUZZ
THE BIRDS AND THE BEES DIDN'T REALLY TEACH ME VERY MUCH. OH... AND I GOT STUNG!
I ASKED MY TEACHER
BABIES ARE GIFTS FROM GOD.
WHERE DO BABIES COME FROM?
SHOULD I ASK MY MOTHER?
HOW WILL I FIND OUT?
OH... DID I TELL YOU I GO TO A CATHOLIC SCHOOL, WITH NUNS AS TEACHERS


YOU HAVE A QUESTION PATRICK
YES SISTER
WHAT IS YOUR QUESTION?
WHAT IS A WOMB?
MY MOTHER IS HAVING A BABY... SHE SAYS THE BABY IS IN HER WOMB
WHY DO YOU ASK SO SILLY QUESTIONS?
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
I WILL WALK HOME WITH PATRICK
WE CAN TALK ABOUT BABIES!
YOU SHOULD NOT ASK SUCH ADULT QUESTIONS
GO SEE THE PRINCIPAL!
BUT SISTER... WOMB IS MENTIONED IN THE LORD'S PRAYER
OH BOY!


YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE BABIES COME FROM
GULP... YES...
BLUSH
MY MOTHER JUST GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY BOY
I WANTED TO KNOW WHERE BABIES COME FROM TOO.
SO MY MOTHER GAVE ME A BOOK.
WILL YOU LEND ME THE BOOK?
NO...
WHY NOT?
LET US READ IT TOGETHER
GULP... OK
WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME OVER NOW?
MAYBE... TOMORROW AFTER SCHOOL
MAYBE TOMORROW YOU CAN COME AFTER SCHOOL?
I WILL HAVE TO ASK MY MOTHER
WOULD YOU LIKE TO STAY FOR DINNER
DINNER?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SLEEP OVER?
GULP... SLEEP OVER!
BLUSH
OH MY... WHAT AM I GETTING MYSELF INTO?


HI MOM.... I'M HOME FROM SCHOOL
GWENYTH'S MOTHER TELEPHONED ME
DID YOU HAVE A GOOD DAY
GULP
YES...
GWENYTH AND I TALKED...
COME HERE I WOULD LIKE TO TALK WITH YOU....
YES MOTHER
OH BOY AM I IN TROUBLE
I KNOW YOU ARE CURIOUS WHERE BABIES COME FROM
YES MAMA
YOUR GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME YOU HAD A TALK...
YES MAMA
I WANTED TO GIVE YOU A BOOK THAT SHOWS YOU WHERE BABIES COME FROM...
GULP
BUT YOUR FATHER SAID NO!
GWENYTH HAS THAT BOOK AND SHE WANTS TO READ IT WITH YOU....
WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO HOME FROM SCHOOL WITH GWENYTH, STAY FOR DINNER AND SLEEP OVER TOMORROW
MAY I MAMA?

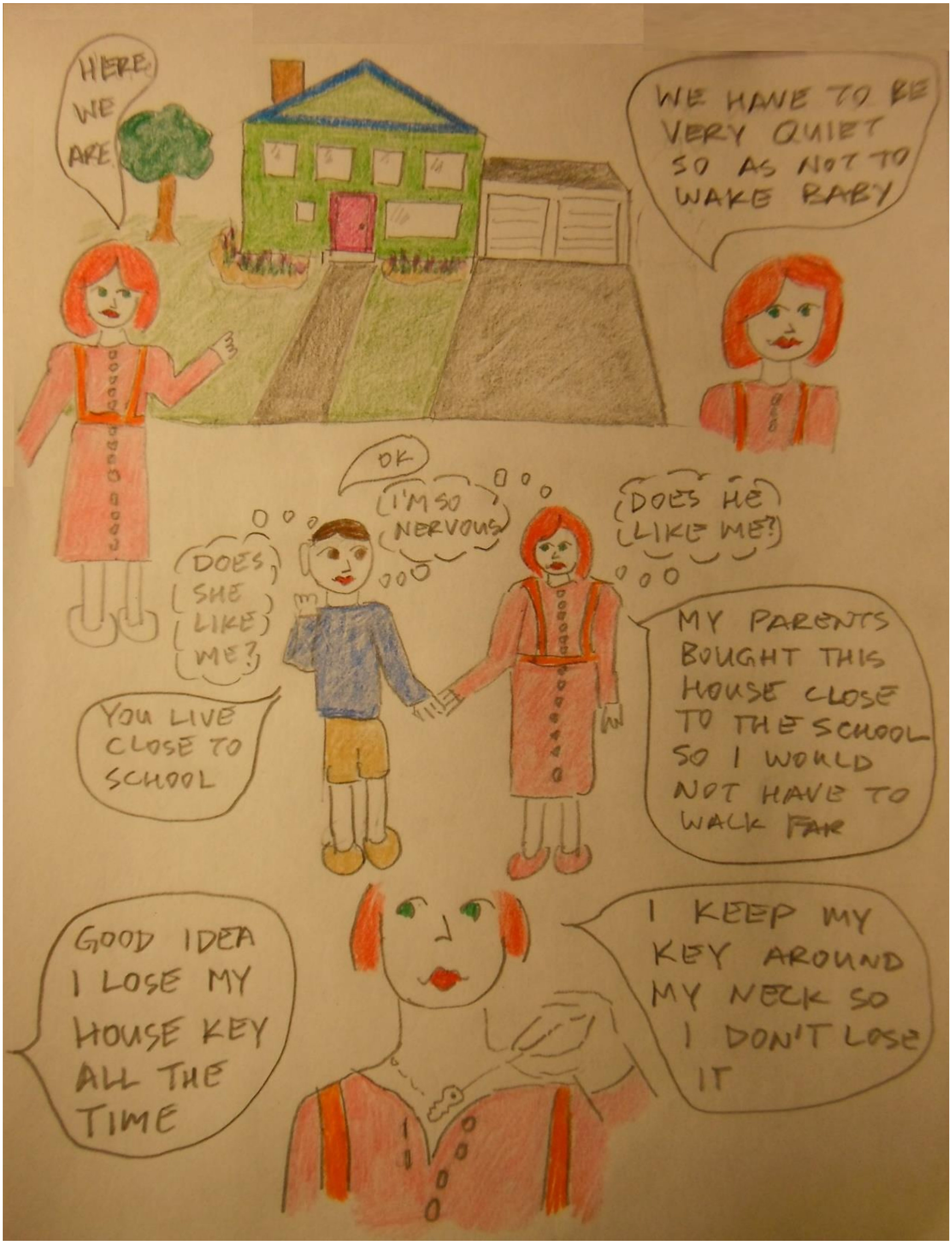

YES YOU MAY.
I GOT YOU THIS BOOK INSTEAD.
WHAT IS IT MAMA?
IT'S ABOUT LEONARDO DA VINCI
OH?
OH MY! AM I OLD ENOUGH TO SEE THIS?
HE DID DRAWINGS OF HUMAN ANATOMY
THERE'S A DRAWING OF A BABY IN ITS MOTHER'S TUMMY
A WOMAN HAS A WOMB
THIS IS THE DRAWING
OH MY....
THE BABY IS INSIDE MY WOMB.
AFTER NINE MONTHS IT WILL WANT TO LEAVE MY WOMB.
OH... MY DEAR SAVE YOUR QUESTIONS UNTIL AFTER YOU'VE READ THE BOOK WITH GWENYTH!
CAN I ASK YOU MAMA... HOW DID THE BABY GET IN THERE?


WHY DO GIRLS LIKE SKIPPING ROPE?
GIRLS ARE COMPETITIVE! IT'S A WAY OF SHOWING WHOSE BEST!
SO DO I
I CAN'T SKIP... I TRIP!
BESIDES MY DRESS IS TOO LONG
SHE'S GOOD!
WOW
PINK PANTIES
THIRTY ONE
THIRTY TWO
SHOW OFF
GWENYTH & PATRICK SITTING IN ♥ TREE
K♥SS♥NG
FIRST COMES L♥VE!
THEN COMES MARRI♥GE
THEN COMES S♥X
BABIES IN A BABY CARRI♥GE!
I TOLD SARAH THAT YOU WERE COMING FOR A VISIT.
I TOLD HER WHY...
BUT I ALSO ASKED HER TO KEEP IT A SECRET!
SIX!
I GUESS SHE DIDN'T KEEP IT A SECRET
GIGGLE GIGGLE
HAVE F♥N!
No!
MAYBE I SHOULD GO HOME?
JUST IGNORE THEM THEY ARE JEALOUS
JEALOUS?


WHY WOULD THEY BE JEALOUS?
OH...YES!
I KNOW ALL ABOUT BABIES...
I KNOW ALL ABOUT BOYS...
I HAVE A BABY BROTHER
HE'S FOUR MONTHS OLD.
GULP
OK
LET'S HOLD HANDS
HIS HAND IS WARM!
OH...
BESIDES... MY MOTHER IS A NURSE...
MY!
AND MY FATHER IS A DOCTOR
WHAT'S THAT?
HE IS AN OBSTETRICIAN.
IT'S A DOCTOR WHO DELIVERS BABIES
AND HALF THE KIDS WE KNOW!
HE DELIVERED ME...
YOU
SARAH
HERE'S YOUR BABY.
DELIVERED?
YOU MEAN LIKE THE STORK?
NO...SILLY!



YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT BABIES DO YOU?
NO
YOU DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT GIRLS EITHER
GULP
NO
MY MOTHER USED TO TAKE ME INTO THE BATH WITH HER
I KNOW GIRLS HAVE BREASTS...
AND THEY HAVE NOTHING BETWEEN THEIR LEGS EXCEPT A TRIANGLE OF HAIR...
NOTHING! HA... WE ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM BOYS
OH AND A BABY IS IN A MOTHER'S WOMB.
THAT'S A START
I HAVE THE BOOK 'A CHILD IS BORN.'
IT HAS WONDERFUL PICTURES OF BABIES GROWING IN THEIR MOTHER'S UTERUS.
UTERUS?
YOU BOYS HAVE SOME-THINGS HANGING OU
OH... THAT'S THE MEDICAL TERM FOR A MOTHER'S WOMB... UTERUS.
I FEEL SO SMALL!
WE GIRLS DON'T
WE DON'T HAVE NOTHING BETWEEN OUR LEGS...
WE HAVE LA 'SOURCE DE VIE'
WHAT IS THAT?
ALL YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED WHEN WE READ THE BOO


HERE WE ARE
WE HAVE TO BE VERY QUIET SO AS NOT TO WAKE BABY
OK
I'M SO NERVOUS
DOES HE LIKE ME?
DOES SHE LIKE ME?
YOU LIVE CLOSE TO SCHOOL
MY PARENTS BOUGHT THIS HOUSE CLOSE TO THE SCHOOL SO I WOULD NOT HAVE TO WALK FAR
GOOD IDEA I LOSE MY HOUSE KEY ALL THE TIME
I KEEP MY KEY AROUND MY NECK SO I DON'T LOSE IT


DEAR IS THAT YOU?
BABY IS AWAKE
IS PATRICK WITH YOU?
NICE HOUSE
THANKS
YES MAMA
CAN WE SEE HIM
YES
IN A FEW MINUTES... I AM FEEDING HIM
CAN WE GO SEE BABY?
LET'S GO INTO THE KITCHEN
SURE
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP?
ARE YOUR FEET COLD
NO...
FOLLOW ME
OK
LEAVE YOUR BAG HERE
THERE'S SOME LEFT FROM LUNCH...
YOU COME HOME FOR LUNCH DON'T YOU?
YES
LUCKY YOU
I GUESS SO BUT I ONLY HAVE A FEW MINUTES TO EAT MY LUNCH.
AT LEAST YOU DON'T HAVE COLD SANDWICHES FOR LUNCH


IT'S VERY GOOD
MY MOTHER MAKES IT FROM SCRATCH
DID YOU BRING YOUR NIGHT THINGS?
IT'S MY FAVORITE
YES
GOOD
IT'S MY GRANDMOTHER'S RECIPE
YES... I HELP MY MOTHER AS BEST I CAN
DEAR... YOU CAN COME UP NOW... BABY NEEDS HIS BATH...
THAT'S NICE
OK MOM
YOU GIVE HIM A BATH
WHILE WE GROW UP... GIRLS LEARN ABOUT BABIES, BOYS... AND SEX
YES
OH MY
SEX
I ALSO CHANGE HIM TOO..
YOU BOYS HAVE IT EASY
I HAVE BUTTERFLIES IN MY TUMMY...
LET'S GO GIVE MY BABY BROTHER HIS BATH


PICK UP YOUR BAG. WE WILL STOP IN MY ROOM FIRST.
GULP
OK
MY ROOM IS AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS,
I HAVE NEVER BEEN IN A GIRL'S ROOM BEFORE
THERE'S ALWAYS A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING
I GUESS SO
DON'T YOU WANT TO COME IN?
WHERE ARE YOU DEAR?
COMING MOM... TWO MINUTES
HE'S GETTING COLD. I WILL START HIS BATH
OK
NICE
YOU SURE LIKE PINK!
THANKS
WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROOM
BLUE
A BOY COLOR!
SO NEAT AND TIDY.
OH...THE COLOR IS ACTUALLY MAGENTA... NOT PINK


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
EVERY DAY WHEN I GET HOME FROM SCHOOL I TAKE OFF MY DRESS AND PUT ON MY PAJAMAS.
OH
YES
DID YOU BRING YOUR PJ's?
OK
WHY DON'T YOU PUT THEM ON?
AS YOU CAN SEE I AM STILL TOO YOUNG, TO HAVE BREASTS
OH!
SHOULD I COVER MY EYES?
WHEN I AM OLDER I WILL HAVE BREASTS
WHEN I AM OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE BABIES
YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT GIRL'S DON'T YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
GULP
OMG!
I AM TAKING OFF MY PANTIES
OH!
NOT YET
I DON'T HAVE HAIR THERE
GIRLS HAVE SOMETHING BETWEEN OUR LEGS
YES... VERY DIFFERENT
WE ARE VERY DIFFERENT
WE HAVE THE SOURCE OF LIFE
THE SOURCE OF LIFE?
WHERE BABIES COME FROM... IT'S ALL EXPLAINED IN THE BOOK


AREN'T YOU GOING TO PUT YOUR PJ ON?
A GIRL IS LIKE A LOCK ... AND A BOY IS LIKE A KEY
GIRL
BOY
MAYBE ... I AM SHY
REALLY?
DON'T BE I KNOW WHAT BOYS LOOK LIKE
WHEN WE READ THE BOOK TOGETHER IT WILL MAKE SENSE
I HAVE NEVER UNDRESSED BEFORE A GIRL BEFORE
DO YOU WANT ME TO TURN AROUND?
GULP
AH... YES.
YOUR MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER HAVE SEEN WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE.
THIS IS YOUR KEY ...
LET ME HELP YOU...
WHERE'S MY PJ'S?
HE'S BEAUTIFUL
I'M SO EMBARASSED
LET'S GO SEE BABY.


HI DEAR
WE ARE FINISHED OUR BATH
HI MAMA
SORRY WE TOOK SO LONG.
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DRY BABY OFF AND PUT ON HIS DIAPER?
YES.
YOU MUST BE PATRICK
GWENYTH HAS TOLD ME ALOT ABOUT YOU
I NEED TO GO START MAKING DINNER.
SEE WHAT DID I TELL YOU!
DO YOU PEE IN THE BATH?
NO
WHY?
I WOULD STAND BACK IF I WERE YOU ...
WHEN HE GETS OUT OF THE BATH BABY LIKES TO PEE.
OH!
THAT'S GOOD!
IT'S GOOD HE DOESN'T PEE IN THE BATH.
THIS IS SO EMBARASSING
MAMA OR I WE TAKE BABY INTO THE BATH WITH US
PATRICK! YOU'RE BLUSHING


GA...GA BURGLE
BURP
YOU BOYS ARE LUCKY...
IN WHAT WAY
YOU CAN STAND WHEN YOU PEE
CAN'T YOU?
OH ... WE HAVE TO SIT, OTHERWISE OUR PEE GOES EVERY WHERE
OHHH...
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING
SURE, ANYTHING
IF A GIRL DOESN'T HAVE A KEY...
YES
HOW DO YOU PEE?
LET'S GO TO BABY'S ROOM
I WILL EXPLAIN THIS AFTER WE CHANGE HIM
ISN'T HE BEAUTIFUL
YES... HE IS. AREN'T ALL BABIES GIFTS FROM GOD?
YOU HAVE BEEN TALKING TO THE NUNS HAVEN'T YOU
YES!
DO YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO DIAPER A BABY?
MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME
HE SURE FELL ASLEEP FAST!
I THINK I SHOULD COVER HIM WITH HIS BLANKET
HE IS SO BEAUTIFUL
ARE YOUR FEET GETTING COLD
YES..., NOW THAT YOU ASK ME, THEY ARE!
LET ME GET US SOME SLIPPERS

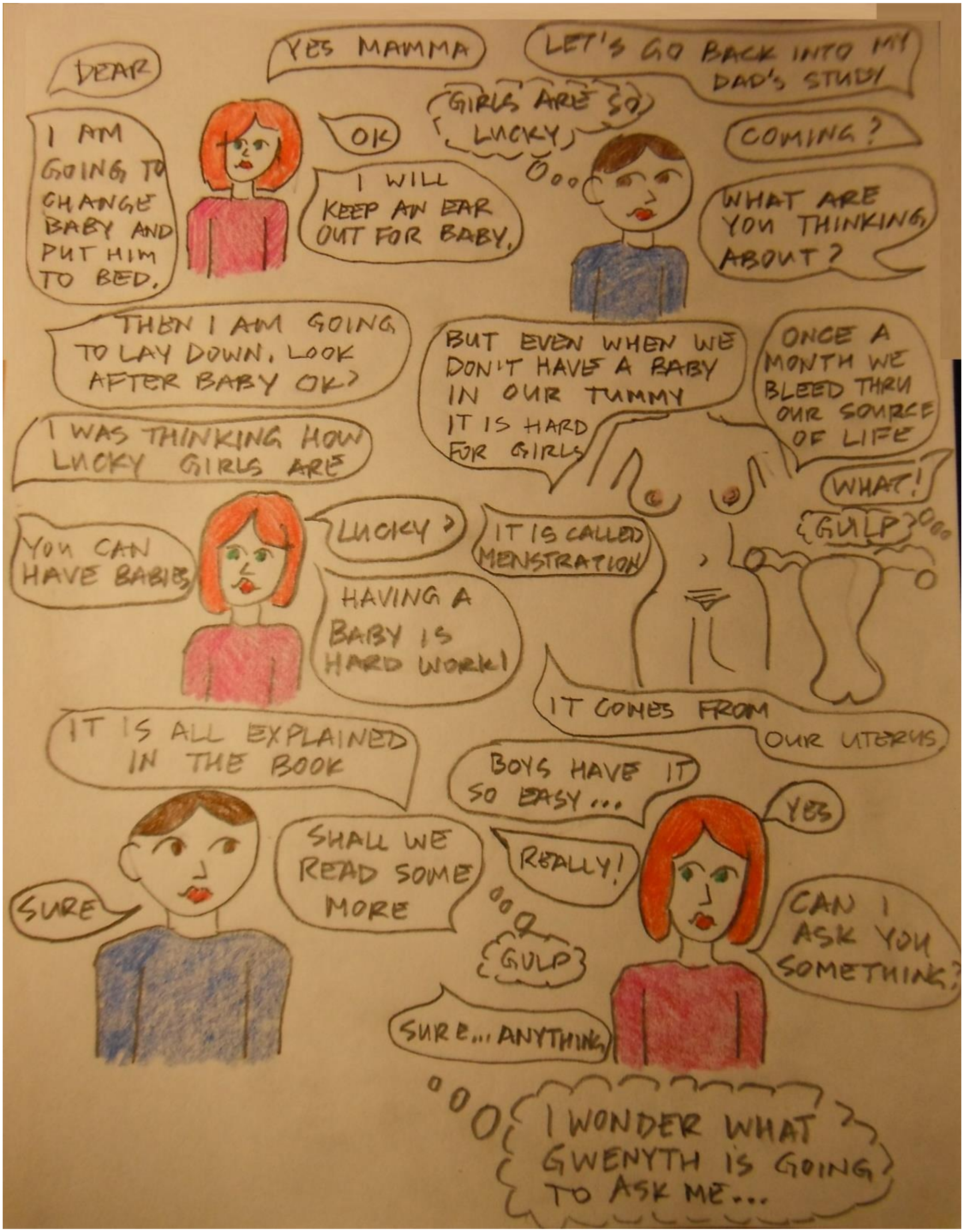

SHH... WE WILL LET HIM SLEEP
LET'S GO BACK TO THE BATHROOM
WHY?
I HAVE TO EMPTY THE BATHTUB
Gurgle Gurgle
OH NO, NOW I HAVE TO PEE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!
I NEEDED TO PEE...
YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME!
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?
GIVEN YOU SOME PRIVACY
DON'T YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT GIRLS?
GULP
BET YOU NEED TO PEE
YES!
CAN I WATCH?
OK!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I AM DOING THIS!
THERE! NOW YOU HAVE SEEN ME PEE!
SO THAT'S HOW BOYS DO IT!
GIRLS AND BOYS ARE VERY DIFFERENT!
OMG!
LET'S GO BACK TO MY ROOM


I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO READ THE BOOK
LET'S GO GET OUR HOMEWORK AND GO DOWNSTAIRS TO MY FATHER'S STUDY...
IT'S DOWN IN MY FATHER'S LIBRARY
OH
MAMA, PAPA'S ASLEEP. I LEFT HIS DOOR AJAR
CAN WE GO INTO PAPA'S STUDY?
YES... BUT KEEP AN EAR OUT FOR BABY
YES MAMA
I HAVE NEVER SEEN SO MANY BOOKS IN A HOME LIBRARY
YOUR FATHER MUST BE VERY SMART
THIS IS PAPA'S STUDY.
HE IS!
WHAT OF HIS BOOKS DO YOU LIKE READING?
I LIKE READING SOME OF HIS BOOKS.
BEING A DOCTOR, HE READS ALL THE TIME!
OH... BIOLOGY CHEMISTRY, ANATOMY...
WOW
BUT MOST OF IT IS TOO COMPLICATED FOR ME...
BUT ITS FUN TO AT LEAST LOOK AT THE PICTURES.
THIS IS THE BOOK WE WILL READ TOGETHER
A CHILD IS BORN
THE DRAMA OF LIFE...
GULP


DEAR... CAN YOU CHECK UPON BABY?
HERE LOOK AT THE BOOK I WILL BE RIGHT BACK
YES MAMA
GULP
OK
DON'T TURN TO THE END...
JUST LOOK AT THE FIRST FEW PAGES
THE SEA THE CRADLE OF LIFE
YIPES! A PICTURE OF BOY BITS
PENIS!
SPERM?
OMG
BABY IS STILL ASLEEP
ARE YOU OK? YOUR FACE IS ALL RED
I GUESS SO
LET'S READ THE BOOK TOGETHER
OK!
THIS IS WHAT A BOY LOOKS LIKE
GULP
FERTILIZATION
TESTIS
ESTROGEN
SPERM
URETHRA
OVUM
OVARY
CHROMOSOMES
WOMB
UTERUS
PITUITARY
EMBRYO
VAGINA
CERVIX
CLITORIS
PENIS


IN THE CENTER OF OUR BRAIN IS THE PITUITARY GLAND
THE PITUITARY GLAND IS LIKE AN ALARM CLOCK
IT REGULATES OUR GROWTH
REGULATES?
... CONTROLS ...
RING
12
9
3
6
RING
HORMONES?
WHEN IT GOES OFF OUR BODY STARTS TO PRODUCE HORMONES
LITTLE ME WILL BECOME BIG ME.
LITTLE YOU WILL BECOME BIG YOU
OMG
OUR BODIES WILL START TO PRODUCE HORMONES
BIG ME IS COVERED IN HAIR
GIRLS WILL PRODUCE ESTROGEN
OH ~
BOYS WILL PRODUCE TESTOSTERONE ... IN YOUR TESTES
BIG HER ONLY HAS HAIR BETWEEN HER LEGS
TESTES?
THE MARBLES IN YOUR MARBLE BAG
ESTROGEN IS PRODUCED IN MY OVARIES
BIG ME LOOKS LIKE A MONSTER
THIS WILL START FOR ME IN SIX YEARS... FOR YOU IN EIGHT
GIRLS MATURE EARLIER THAN BOYS
GULP
DEAR... WAKE UP BABY ... DINNER IS READY ...
YES MAMMA
BOY AM I HUNGRY!

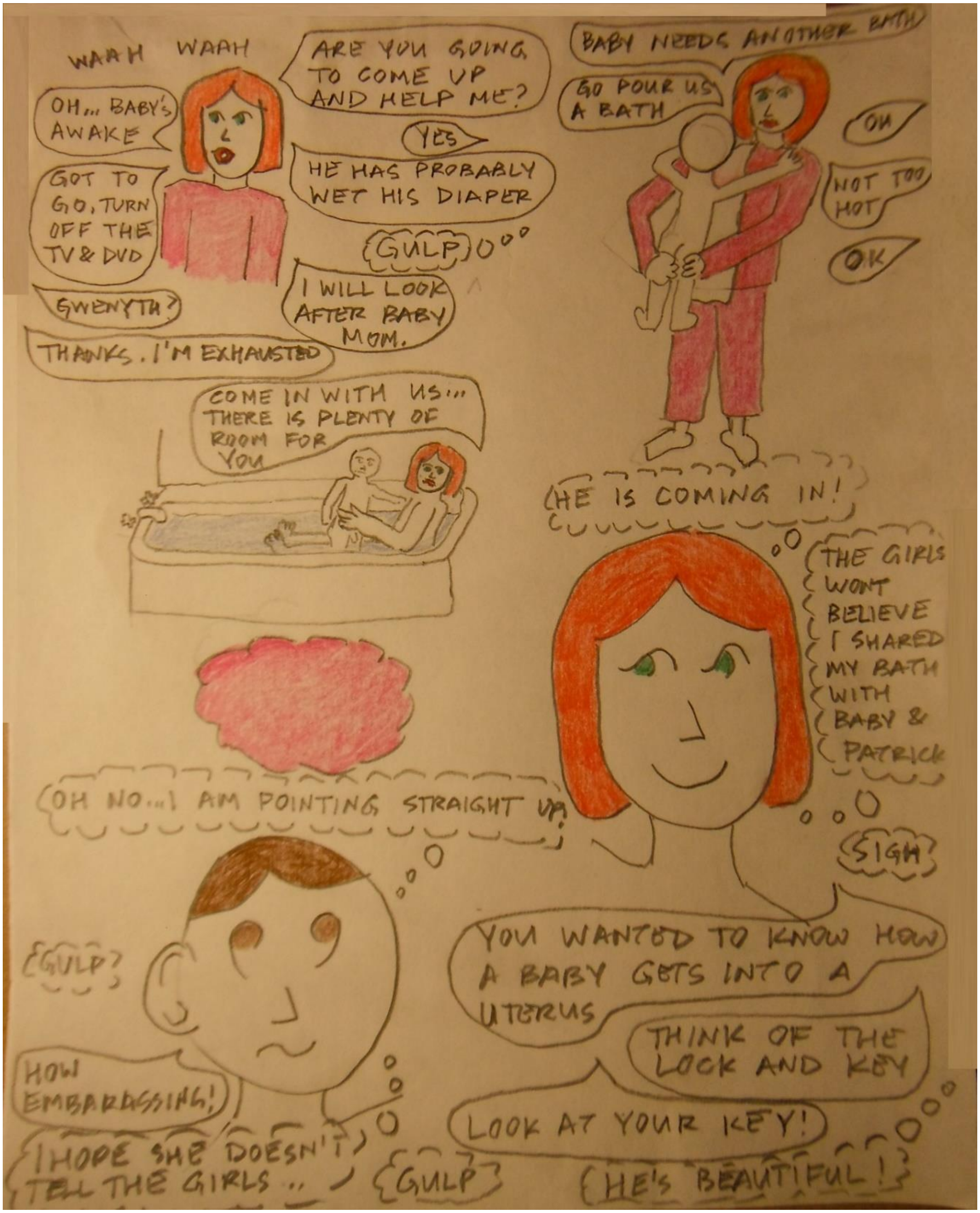

THIS IS VERY GOOD!
WHERE IS YOUR MOTHER
I AM GLAD YOU LIKE IT
SHE IS FEEDING BABY
OH
MAMMA
YES DEAR
CAN WE COME WATCH YOU FEED BABY?
NO!
YES DEAR
DON'T YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT GIRLS?
GULP
BABY IS VERY HUNGRY TONIGHT
BABY NEEDS TO BE FED EVERY FOUR HOURS
HER BREASTS ARE HUGE
SLURP
THUP
SLURP
THUP
PATRICK, YOU CAN COME CLOSER IF YOU WANT TO
PINK
YOUR MOTHER BREAST FED YOU WHEN YOU WERE A BABY
WOMEN HAVE BREASTS SO THAT THEY CAN FEED THEIR BABIES



DEAR
YES MAMMA
LET'S GO BACK INTO MY DAD'S STUDY
I AM GOING TO CHANGE BABY AND PUT HIM TO BED.
OK
GIRLS ARE SO LUCKY
COMING?
I WILL KEEP AN EAR OUT FOR BABY.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
THEN I AM GOING TO LAY DOWN. LOOK AFTER BABY OK?
BUT EVEN WHEN WE DON'T HAVE A BABY IN OUR TUMMY IT IS HARD FOR GIRLS
ONCE A MONTH WE BLEED THRU OUR SOURCE OF LIFE
I WAS THINKING HOW LUCKY GIRLS ARE
WHAT!
GULP
YOU CAN HAVE BABIES
LUCKY?
IT IS CALLED MENSTRATION
HAVING A BABY IS HARD WORK!
IT COMES FROM OUR UTERUS
IT IS ALL EXPLAINED IN THE BOOK
BOYS HAVE IT SO EASY...
YES
SHALL WE READ SOME MORE
REALLY!
SURE
GULP
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
SURE... ANYTHING
I WONDER WHAT GWENYTH IS GOING TO ASK ME...



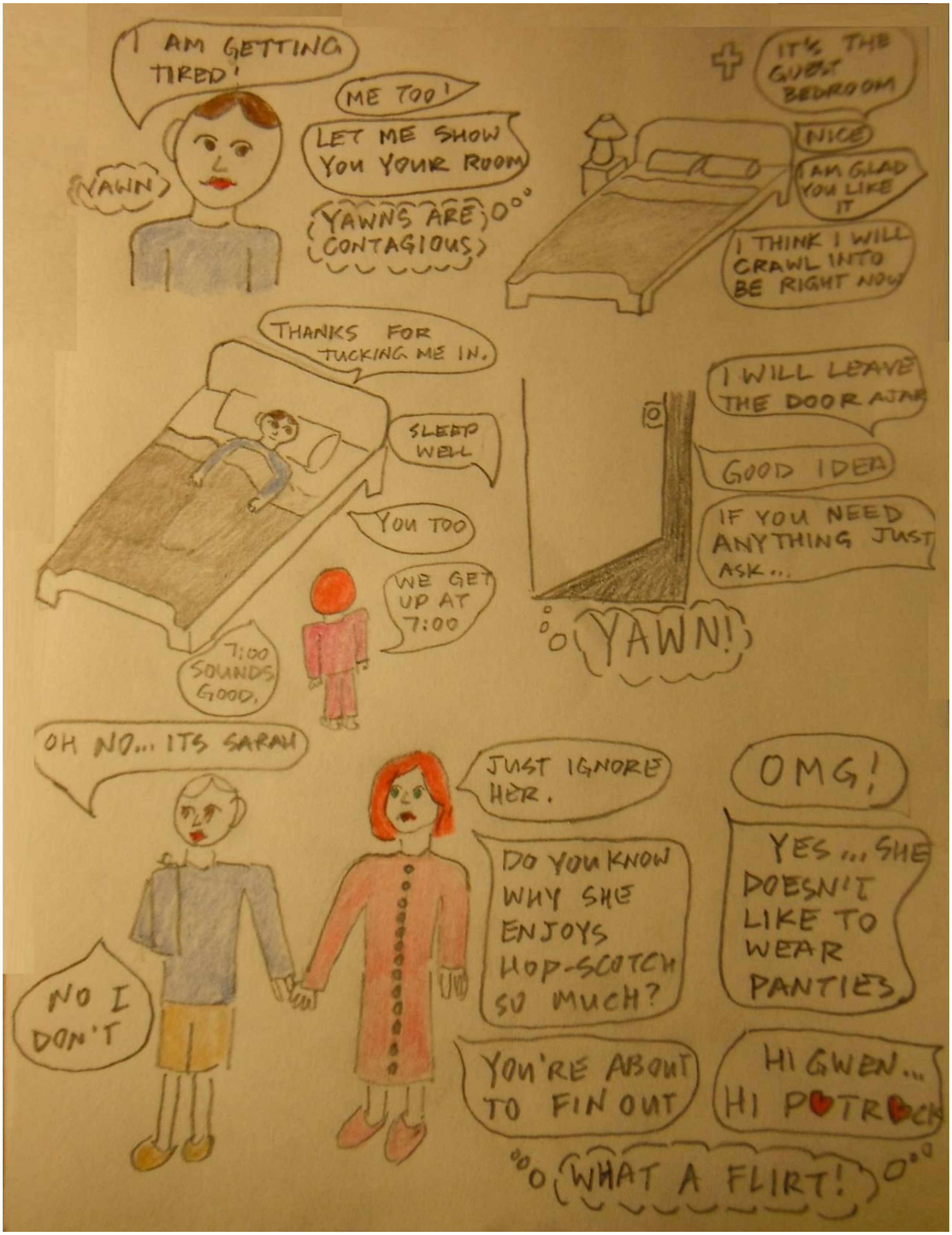
DO YOU WANT TO WATCH A BABY BEING BORN?
I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD
MY MOM ASKED YOUR MOM AND SHE SAID YOU COULD...
OK!
BLUSH
COME LET'S GO WATCH
HIS HAND IS SO HOT!
GULP
IT'S A DOCUMENTARY MY FATHER ASKS HIS EXPECTANT MOTHERS TO WATCH
HE GIVES THEM COPIES OF THE DVD
YOUR MOTHER HAS A COPY
BE MY FATHER DOESN'T KNOW
IT IS A PBS NOVA SCIENCE FILM
WE WON'T WATCH THE WHOLE SHOW
WHY?
...IT'S AN HOUR LONG.
OH
IT WILL BE BED TIME SOON
THAT'S REMARKABLE
HERE BABY COMES.
IT IS, ISN'T IT
I WONDERED HOW SUCH A BIG BABY COMES OUT FROM HER MAMMAS TUMMY
PUSH!
PUSH!
WAA WAA...
THAT SOUNDS PAINFUL
MAMMA SAYS IT'S NOT THAT PAINFULL...
IT'S A GIRL! CONGRATULATIONS...
THE SOURCE OF LIFE STRETCHES TO TEN TIMES ITS NORMAL SIZE
BUT CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING
LET ME GUESS... HOW DOES BABY GET IN THEIR MOTHER'S UTERUS...



WAAH WAAH
OH... BABY'S AWAKE
ARE YOU GOING TO COME UP AND HELP ME?
YES
GOT TO GO, TURN OFF THE TV & DVD
HE HAS PROBABLY WET HIS DIAPER
GULP
GWENYTH?
I WILL LOOK AFTER BABY MOM.
THANKS. I'M EXHAUSTED
BABY NEEDS ANOTHER BATH
GO POUR US A BATH
OH
NOT TOO HOT
OK
COME IN WITH US... THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR YOU
HE IS COMING IN!
THE GIRLS WONT BELIEVE I SHARED MY BATH WITH BABY & PATRICK
OH NO... I AM POINTING STRAIGHT UP
SIGH
GULP
YOU WANTED TO KNOW HOW A BABY GETS INTO A UTERUS
THINK OF THE LOCK AND KEY
HOW EMBARASSING!
LOOK AT YOUR KEY!
I HOPE SHE DOESN'T TELL THE GIRLS ..
GULP
HE'S BEAUTIFUL!


SO NOW YOU KNOW ABOUT
IT'S SO COMPLICATED!
BABY SURE LIKES WATER DOESN'T HE
YES HE DOES!
NO...
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HOLD HIM?
THIS IS SO WONDERFUL
MY TOES ARE TOUCHING HIM
HER TOES ARE TICKLING ME!
WE ARE GETTING OUT
OK
NO I WILL GET OUT TOO...
STAY IN AS LONG AS YOU LIKE
AFTER I PUT HIM TO BED I WILL COME BACK IN
OH... OK I WILL WAIT FOR YOU


THE WATER IS GETTING COLD
I THINK I WILL GET OUT
I WONDER IF GWENYTH WANTS ME TO STAY IN THE BATH
OR SHOULD I GET OUT?
BABY IS IN BED. I THINK IT IS TIME FOR US TO GO TO BED TOO
I WILL GET A TOWEL FOR YOU
I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN OUT
IT WILL BE AWHILE BEFORE YOU CAN BE A FATHER
YOUR MARBLE SACK IS STILL EMPTY


I AM GETTING TIRED!
ME TOO!
YAWN
LET ME SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM
YAWNS ARE CONTAGIOUS
IT'S THE GUEST BEDROOM
NICE
I AM GLAD YOU LIKE IT
I THINK I WILL CRAWL INTO BE RIGHT NOW
THANKS FOR TUCKING ME IN.
SLEEP WELL
YOU TOO
WE GET UP AT 7:00
7:00 SOUNDS GOOD.
I WILL LEAVE THE DOOR AJAR
GOOD IDEA
IF YOU NEED ANYTHING JUST ASK...
YAWN!
OH NO... ITS SARAH
JUST IGNORE HER.
OMG!
DO YOU KNOW WHY SHE ENJOYS HOP-SCOTCH SO MUCH?
YES... SHE DOESN'T LIKE TO WEAR PANTIES
NO I DON'T
YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIN OUT
HI GWEN... HI PATRICK
WHAT A FLIRT!


HELLO! PATRICK HOW WAS YOUR VISIT?
TIRED MORE TIRED THAN WHEN I WAS HAVING YOU.
YOU MUST BE GWENYTH.
FUN
HOW ARE YOU MAMMA
YES
YES
CAN GWEN LISTEN FOR BABY?
I CAN HEAR YOUR BABY
WHAT?
I CAN HEAR A SECOND HEART-BEAT
SO... DO YOU NOW KNOW ALL ABOUT BABIES?
GULP!
NOT REALLY MAMMA, IT IS VERY COMPLICATED!
YES, IT IS
HE WATCHED A FILM ABOUT THE BIRTH OF A BABY.
OH... MY!
HE'S BLUSHING
THAT'S GOOD
WAS HE A GOOD BOY
YES HE WAS
AM I INVISIBLE
WANT TO SHOW ME YOUR ROOM?
OK
NO WONDER MAMMAS SO TIRED... SHE CLEANED MY ROOM.
GWENYTH YOU ARE WELCOME TO STAY THE DAY...
GULP
MAY I? THAT WOULD BE FUN.


WOW... WHAT A CLEAN ROOM!
WOW... MY ROOM HAS NEVER BEEN SO CLEAN AND ORGANIZED
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?
OUR HOMEWORK
NODO!
OK... LET'S DO SOME ART
UMM...
YOU DECIDE
ART?
LET'S DRAW
DRAW WHAT?
LET'S DRAW A COMIC BOOK ABOUT WHERE A BABY COMES FROM
GULP
SURE
...OK... YOU DRAW... AND I WILL WRITE THE WORDS...
OH... THAT WILL BE FUN!

Pictorial: Girls and their Curls



Jean Straker, Visual Art Club, Soho London circa 1950

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